



# AIDS 2024

# YOUTH

# DECLARATION

Developed in partnership with  
youth with support from **READY**  
and the Munich Youth Force



## MUNICH YOUTH FORCE

International AIDS Conference 2024



In all our diversity, representing our communities and constituents globally, we, the young people, have come together to amplify the needs and priorities of young people in preparation for the International AIDS Conference 2024.

We **acknowledge** the importance of the AIDS 2024 Conference as a rallying point for communities, governments, donors, UN agencies, and other organisations to draw attention to emerging issues, priorities, gaps, opportunities, and successes in the global response to HIV.

We **embrace** the power and legitimacy of youth voices to shape the AIDS 2024 agenda in favour of our needs and wants.

We **acknowledge** the significant progress made in the HIV response over the last decade, especially in reducing new HIV infections and AIDS-related mortality, as well as increasing access to HIV testing and treatment.

We **celebrate** advances in global drug policy, hoping for a more rights-based approach and adopting policy reforms that reduce legal barriers for young people to access critical HIV and sexual reproductive health services.

We **perceive** the global HIV response as a double-barrel of hope and worry, with notable successes amid grave neglect. At the current pace of progress, we still have a long way to go if we are to reach **the global 2030 targets on HIV and AIDS**.

## AS YOUTH, WE ARE:



**Angered** by our continued exclusion from decision-making spaces, which has been fueled by tough immigration policies and high costs that have prevented young people from taking part in the AIDS 2024 Conference;



**Frustrated** by the widespread criminalisation of young people based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sex work, and those who use drugs, despite overwhelming evidence showing that such laws and policies hinder the HIV response;



**Annoyed** by the lack of will and action from our governments to increase domestic funding for HIV prevention and treatment programs in countries amid declines in HIV funding;



**Shocked** at the loss of gains in community mobilisation for HIV prevention and the reluctance of some governments to ensure the delivery of comprehensive sexuality education for all young people;



**Disheartened** that harmful norms, beliefs, and practices continue to claim lives, including through fake HIV cure claims, stigma against people living with HIV, and the lack of appropriate medical procedures that are involved when it comes to the extraction of blood;



**Worried** that some sub-populations of young people are being continuously marginalised at the margin in local and global HIV responses, including young intersex persons, young sex workers, young mothers living with HIV, young migrants, young drug users, young people with disabilities;



**Concerned** that young people across the globe continue to face barriers when they seek health services because of high costs, lack of confidentiality and commodity stock-outs.

In response to these concerns, **we call upon governments, members of parliament, funders, UN agencies, civil society organisations, and faith leaders** to prioritise the following actions to accelerate the HIV response for young people in their countries:

- 1. Urgently remove legal barriers** to young people's access to health services, including decriminalisation of sex work, drug use, and sexual orientation, as well as decriminalising the work of organisations serving the needs of young key populations.
- 2. Respect our diversity and revitalise HIV prevention efforts** by scaling up access to Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PreP) and antiretroviral therapy (ART), increasing investments in comprehensive sexuality education, adopting mobile services and telemedicine, and ensuring the availability of integrated services.
- 3. Recognise our diversity and adopt intersectional approaches** that address the effects of mental health, poverty, climate crisis, war and conflict on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people.
- 4. Support youth leadership** through strengthening the capacity of youth-led organisations, availing opportunities for young leaders to present their priorities in high-level forums, increasing engagement of adolescent girls and young women, investing in digital advocacy and providing unrestricted funding for youth-led initiatives.
- 5. Prioritise the expansion of treatment options** for young people living with HIV, including through one-stop shops in inaccessible locations, ensuring the availability of injectable

ARVs such as Lenacapavir to enable us to make informed choices.

6. **Invest in youth-driven interventions** and the empowerment of youth-led organisations through youth-friendly structures and channels.
7. **Eliminate stigma and discrimination** against young people living with HIV and young key populations through sustained social and behavioural change campaigns.
8. **Adopt equitable, evidence-based approaches** working closely with young people to identify and respond to emerging needs and approaches in local HIV responses, giving cognisance to those in war-affected countries.
9. **Sustain domestic funding for the HIV response** to reduce the reliance on external financing and ensure uninterrupted HIV programs for adolescents and young key populations.
10. **Revamp efforts to support young people already living with HIV to realise positive health outcomes**, including the elimination of vertical transmission by providing comprehensive support to young mothers living with HIV, including access to affordable and safe alternatives to breastfeeding.

We are making these demands in our pursuit of a world where there is no criminalization and zero stigma. We want a world where young people living with and affected by HIV can access critical health services securely, freely, and without fear. We expect to be treated not only as beneficiaries of programs but also supported as leaders and equal partners, where every young person is meaningfully engaged in the decisions that impact their health and well-being. More importantly, we stand in solidarity with our supporters and partners to lead and monitor progress in achieving the end of AIDS. We believe that a better world is possible and that, in partnership with you, we can accelerate progress toward the 2030 targets and a more hopeful future.